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American political culture has long been a man's world.

By: Christie Smith

After centuries of women being kept, for the most part, out of participating in politics, U.S. news publications heralded 1992 the “Year of the Woman” after a historic number of women were elected to the U.S. Senate. There were only four of them.

In more recent history, there were more than 100 women in Congress for the first time ever in 2014, according to the Congressional Research Service. Of the 535 representatives, nearly 20 percent were women.

Now America is facing the 2016 election and the possibility that a woman could hold its highest office.

“It’s helpful to recognize the importance and the historic nature of having two viable female candidates running,” said Kelly Winfrey, an assistant professor in the Greenlee School of Journalism and Mass Communication who researches gender in politics.

Clinton and Fiorina’s candidacies have called for scrutiny and analyses not solely on the candidates themselves—their educations, their careers, their plans for the country—but also on the basis of their gender.

Logan Maxwell, sophomore in history, interns and volunteers for the Fiorina campaign headquarters in Des Moines. He said that he believes Fiorina is overcoming the gender bias and challenging the status quo.

“She’s not running on the fact that she’s a woman, but that she’s the one who’s going to help change the country,” Maxwell said.

Zach Rodgers, junior in political science and a member of the student group Cyclones for Hillary, said, “When women are trying to get something done, they’re told they’re shouting.”

Both Clinton and Fiorina have been accused of playing the so-called gender card in their campaigns. Clinton has capitalized on the premise that “women’s rights are human’s rights,” a term she coined at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.

Fiorina has taken an approach in her campaign that “women are not a special interest group,” as she stated in the second GOP debate on Wednesday, Sept. 16.

According to Winfrey, either approach can be valuable.

“I don’t think a candidate should ignore the fact that they are different than what other candidates have been,” Winfrey said.

Winfrey said research has shown that women often participate politically in different ways than their male counterparts. They are often more cooperative, bipartisan and concerned with a broader range of issues, like those that are relevant to people in need.

Chris Kelley, ISU alumnus, said Clinton’s willingness to help others is what makes her an excellent candidate for president. “My biggest reason to rally behind her is her passion for equality not only in America, but worldwide,” Kelley said. “She is and will continue to be an excellent champion for minorities across the board.”

Audrey Scagnelli, Carly for America press secretary, said that she has gotten emails from parents who say that they’re thankful to have someone like Fiorina for their daughters to look up to.

“She’s a role model and an inspiration to young women,” Scagnelli said, citing Fiorina’s experiences as a breast cancer survivor and a mother.

Although magnifying the otherness of Clinton and Fiorina as female presidential candidates can be problematic, Winfrey said it is important to note their differences in a way that does not hinge on their pantsuits or their roles as grandmothers and wives.

“I feel that it’s time for a woman to be in the White House,” Rodgers said. “Many other developed countries have had women leaders, and we’re kind of behind the pack in that.”



Photos by: Jessica Darland

CLINTON

Hillary Rodham Clinton was born in Park Ridge, Illinois. Clinton's father was a textile wholesaler, and her mother worked as a babysitter and housekeeper. Clinton was the oldest of three children in a conservative family, according to her campaign website.

Clinton attended Wellesley College where she was one of 27 women in her graduating class. Throughout her young adulthood, Clinton participated in Republican groups and campaigned for Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater.

In an interview with the MAKERS documentary series, Clinton said after an internship with Gerald Ford at the House Republican Conference, she decided she no longer identified with conservative ideologies.

Clinton attended Yale law school where she met her future husband Bill Clinton. She graduated in 1973 with honors.

During law school, she worked with democratic politicians and campaigned for presidential candidate, George McGovern. After law school, Clinton worked with the presidential impeachment inquiry staff on the Watergate Scandal involving President Richard Nixon.

Clinton then moved to Arkansas, where she taught at the University of Arkansas Law School.

Clinton married in 1975 and was appointed to the Board of Legal Services Corporation by President Jimmy Carter in 1978.

In 1993, Clinton became the First Lady of the United States, and in this capacity she focused on health care reform and drew attention to gender issues.

Clinton stood by her husband's side in the wake of his infidelity and the articles of impeachment brought against him in 1998. The president was acquitted in 1999, which the National First Ladies' Library credited to Clinton's public support of him.

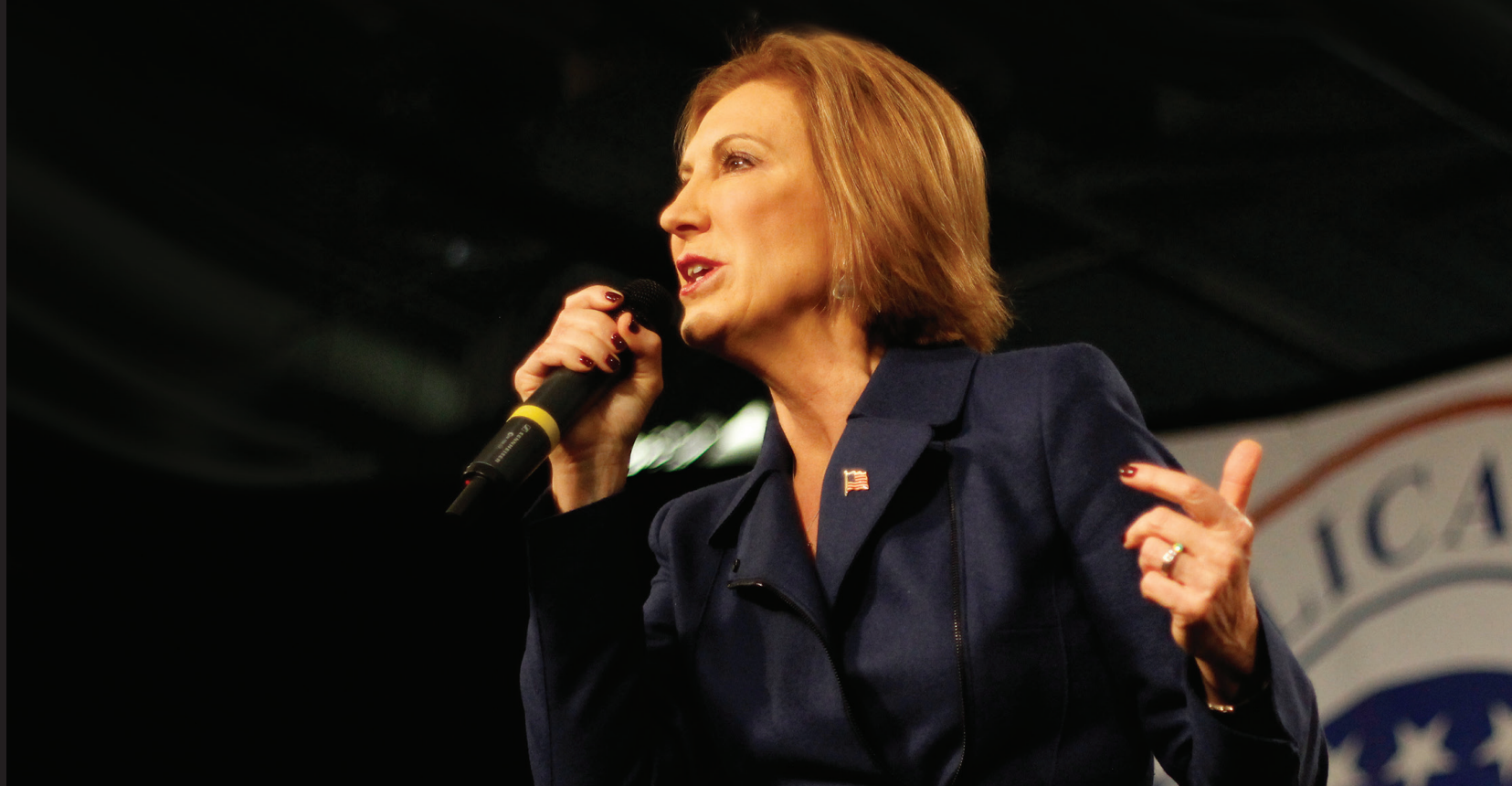
Near the end of her role as first lady, Clinton won a U.S. Senate seat in New York, becoming the only first lady to hold public office.

In 2007, Clinton campaigned to become the Democratic nominee for president. Clinton lost the nomination to Barack Obama, who named her secretary of state when he became president.

Clinton was the third woman and the only first lady to be Secretary of State.

Clinton has been criticized for her role as secretary of state at the time of the 2012 attack on the U.S. Embassy in Benghazi, Libya.

She is also being investigated for using her personal email to send or receive classified information during her time as secretary of state.



FIORINA

Carly Fiorina was born in Austin, Texas. Her father was a judge and lawyer, and her mother was an artist. As a child, Fiorina's family moved often, and she attended school in Ghana and the United Kingdom, as well as several states in America, according to Britannica Encyclopedia.

Fiorina attended Stanford University, where she got a bachelor's degree in philosophy and medieval history. She was accepted to law school at the University of California in Los Angeles, but dropped out after one semester, according to Britannica.

She later received a master of business administration at the University of Maryland and a master's in science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

When she was 25, Fiorina began working at AT&T in an entry-level position. Here, she began the journey that she often describes on the campaign trail as "secretary to CEO."

According to her campaign website, within 15 years of her employment at AT&T, Fiorina was heading AT&T's spin-off, Lucent Technologies.

In 1999, Fiorina was named the CEO of Hewlett-Packard. She was the first outsider to head the company in more than 60 years, according to Britannica, and she was the first woman to head a Fortune 50 company, according to her campaign's website.

She had the idea to merge HP with Compaq Computer Corporation, an idea that Fiorina said was unpopular among HP executives, according to her website.

Despite the resistance to her idea, the second and third largest companies in America at the time were merged when Fiorina won a 1.4 percent majority of the votes of shareholders.

The merged company, which retained the name HP, was not as profitable as Fiorina had imagined, according to Britannica. In 2005, she was forced to resign as CEO.

In 2010, Fiorina underwent treatment for breast cancer and simultaneously announced a bid for U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer's seat, according to Fiorina's campaign website.

Fiorina produced an ad known notoriously as the "demon sheep ad," in which she criticized opponent Tom Campbell for being a "fiscal conservative in name only."

Despite mixed reactions to the ad, Fiorina secured her party's nomination but lost the election to Boxer.

During the 2010 election and Fiorina's fight against breast cancer, Fiorina's daughter also died.

Fiorina makes being a Washington outsider a pillar of her campaign.